DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 482 180 JC 030 618

TITLE	Austin Community College Effectiveness Improvements Report, Summer 2003.
INSTITUTION	Austin Community Coll., TX. Office of Institutional Effectiveness.
PUB DATE	2003-00-00
NOTE	11p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Affective Measures; *Community Colleges; Educational Assessment; Evaluation Methods; Program Development; Program Evaluation; Program Improvement; *School Effectiveness; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*Austin Community College TX

ABSTRACT

This document is the annual effectiveness improvements report for Austin Community College in 2003. The report summarizes which improvements have been implemented and whether they have been successful or not. The seven areas of improvement that are looked at are: (1) workforce education; (2) transfer programs; (3) continuing education; (4) adult education; (5) developmental education; (6) access and diversity; and (7) student retention. The document addresses improvements that were made in each area and concludes with the following recommendation to be implemented in the future: (1) effectiveness measures should be defined in such a way to align with the mission of the school meaning that new goals should be redefined for the future; (2) the Associate Vice Presidents are responsible for revisiting the current measures in order to ensure that each area is reporting information in such a way to allow the school to fulfill its mission statement; (3) Associate Vice Presidents are responsible for reporting improvement data that has been made in different areas in order to help in the writing in the next annual effectiveness report; (4) all information collected on the measures and levels of improvement should be used in order to create a master plan; and (5) unit level assessment should address at least one critical success area. (MZ)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 482 180

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Austin Community College
Effectiveness Improvements Report
Summer 2003

The purpose of the *Effectiveness Improvements Report* is to document ACC's use of college-wide effectiveness assessment results to implement institutional improvements that enhance the quality of students' educational experiences. During 1998 and 1999, the President's Effectiveness Council defined college-wide effectiveness measures and identified assessment tools for each of seven critical indicators of the College's success in fulfilling its mission. Each year, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness reports data required for each measure. Associate Vice Presidents implement improvements in the areas for which they are responsible. (See *College-Wide Measures* and *Effectiveness Update* reports at http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us/oiepub/initiatives/assessment/measures.html). The *Effectiveness Improvements Report* summarizes, and provides evidence of, the major improvements that have been implemented to date. The seven critical success areas that are assessed annually include the following:

- Workforce education
- Transfer programs
- Continuing education
- Adult education
- Developmental education
- Access/diversity
- Student retention

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. Oburn

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Additionally, this report presents recommendations for the revision or expansion of existing measures and the addition of new measures, where appropriate.

Summary of Improvements and Recommendations

Critical Success Area: Workforce Education Programs

Related statement from ACC's Mission: [a] Vocational and technical programs of varying lengths leading to certificates or degrees.

Effectiveness Measures:

1. Students in workforce education programs will meet their educational goals.
2. Graduates from workforce programs will find employment in jobs related to their fields of study.

Overall the College is fulfilling this mission function satisfactorily.

Improvements:

1. Students in workforce education programs will meet their educational goals.

It has proven to be difficult to provide data for this measure for several reasons. The measure compares students' educational objective at entry to a six-year time frame for completing an associate's degree or a certificate in a workforce program. The first six-year period will not be complete until 2005. Additionally, students' educational goals

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TC030618

tend to change over time, and until recently, there was no process that required students to update their educational goal in the student database. Thus the data needed to determine whether this measure was achieved are either not yet available or not reliable. As a proxy for this measure, workforce education programs have used data from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

Even so, ACC has implemented several improvements that address this indicator. First, Information Technology made programming changes to the telephone registration system to capture students' current educational objectives into the student database. Currently, the first step in the telephone registration process requires students to update their educational objective each semester that they are enrolled. See Telephone Registration worksheet at http://www.austincc.edu/howtoreg/fall03/worksheet.htm.

Another improvement made in response to this measure is the College's participation in the WECM project. WECM is the acronym for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's *Workforce Education Course Manual*. Using the WECM, ACC has been able to incorporate industry-established skills standards into workforce education curricula, increase access to workforce education degrees and career advancement, enhance the portability of students' credits and credentials, and facilitate articulation with other providers of education at both the secondary and post-secondary levels. The WECM, which is updated annually, allows the College to provide high quality and consistent workforce education that supports students' in achieving their goals whether at ACC or another Texas institution. For documentation of the way the WECM is used to adjust workforce programs, see Curriculum and Program Committee minutes for January 24, 2003; October 25, 2002; August 30, 2002; March 29, 2002 at http://accweb.austin.cc.tx.us/minutes/currchpg.htm

To further support students in achieving their educational goals, the College created several Instructional Associate positions. Instructional Associates (IAs), are ACC adjunct faculty and serve as liaisons for their departments, assisting faculty in designing and providing supplemental curriculum activities. They also act as a resource/mentor for other tutors in their content area. Responsibilities include tutoring, conducting workshops for students, faculty, and staff, and providing information on content-area software. IAs may collaborate with the lab manager to oversee tutors in content area and conduct tutor training. They also work closely with Task Forces to facilitate curriculum implementation and improvement. See the Instructional Associate job description at the following link: http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us/pintutor/faculty/iajobdes.htm

2. Graduates from workforce programs will find employment in jobs related to their fields of study.

Austin Community College performs well on this measure. Each year ninety percent or more of ACC's workforce program graduates are reported to be employed (or enrolled in further education) by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The College's participation in the WECM project has also certainly impacted this outcome by providing students with skill sets that are valued by employers. Additionally, to assist graduates in finding jobs, the College has created several programs in response to the

employment needs of the community (including Dental Hygiene, Environmental Technology, International Business, and Pharmacy technology) and several Marketable Skills Awards (MSA) in various employment fields (professional accounting, accounting technical, accounting specialist). The MSA is awarded to students who demonstrate mastery of entry-level job skills. See Curriculum and Programs Committee meeting minutes for October, 25, 2002 at the following link:
http://accweb.austin.cc.tx.us/minutes/currchpg.htm.

Critical Success Area: Academic Transfer Programs

Related Statement from ACC's Mission (Board Policy A-1): [b] Freshman and sophomore-level academic courses leading to an associate degree or serving as the base of a baccalaureate degree program at a four-year institution.

Effectiveness Measures:

1. Transfer Rate
2. Transfer Intent Fulfillment
3. Success at the Transfer Institution

Overall the College is fulfilling this mission function satisfactorily.

Improvements:

1. Transfer Rate

The creation of the Transfer Articulation Office is perhaps the most pervasive improvement the College has implemented to impact the transfer rate for students who wish to transfer to four-year institutions. This position was created in the 1999-2000 academic year for the express purpose of working with four-year colleges and universities to develop or strengthen processes that facilitate transfer of ACC students. The Articulation Officer worked directly with ACC faculty and faculty at four-year colleges to arrive at agreement on course equivalencies and course content. In addition, the Articulation Officer actively pursued development of articulation agreements, another factor which removed many of the barriers transfer students faced. This office provides resources and support for students transferring to or from ACC, as well as for faculty, advisors and counselors who work with those students. The Articulation and Transfer Services web site (http://www2.austincc.edu/transfer/) contains links to equivalency guides, transfer guides, university information sheets, lists of transfer scholarships and articulation agreements, and answers to Frequently Asked Questions. Additionally, this office publishes an articulation update newsletter and transfer institution conference notes on the web site.

2. Transfer Intent Fulfillment

This measure is similar to that of educational goal achievement for workforce programs. As stated before, providing data with which to measure intent/goal achievement has been difficult. Improvements made to the telephone registration system should allow the College to provide more reliable data for this indicator. See the Telephone Registration worksheet at http://www.austincc.edu/howtoreg/fall03/worksheet.htm.

3. Success at the Transfer Institution

Again, the Transfer Articulation Office has been instrumental in improving the outcomes for this measure. First, by facilitating conversations between faculty at ACC and the transfer institutions to insure the courses taught are equivalent and students are prepared for the next-level course at the transfer institution. Second, by establishing relationships with the transfer institutions and encouraging them to provide the data ACC needs to be able to track our students' performance. See the Transfer and Articulation Services web site at http://www2.austincc.edu/transfer/.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness has created a Transfer Information page on its web site to publish data relevant to transfer student performance (as well as other information relevant to the transfer function. See the Transfer Information web page at http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us/oiepub/pubs/transfer/index.html.

Critical Success Area: Continuing Education Programs

Related statements from ACC's Mission (Board Policy A-1): [c] Continuing adult education for academic, occupational, professional, and cultural enhancement and *[g]contracted instructional programs and services for area employers that promote economic development.*

Effectiveness Measures:

1. Students who take continuing education courses will be satisfied with those courses.
2. Employers who contract for ACC customized training will be satisfied with the training their employees receive.
3. Students taking continuing education courses to meet licensure requirements will meet those requirements.

Overall the College is fulfilling this mission function satisfactorily.

Improvements:

Each semester the Continuing Education Instructor/Course Evaluation Committee reviews the evaluation data and makes recommendations. The data are given to the appropriate department director who then passes it on to the coordinator responsible for the course. The coordinator reviews the information and makes changes in either the course and/or the instructor as indicated by the evaluation data. New courses may be implemented also based upon information obtained in the evaluation process. Each department director ensures that the evaluation data are reviewed and that changes are made as needed. The directors report back to the CE Leadership Team about the changes made and correction plans in each area.

Examples of changes that have been made during the past academic year to ensure quality of offerings and to respond to student needs include:

- Changes in course content
- Offering other similar courses in response to student requests
- Working with instructors to improve teaching skills and presentation style
- Selecting a different instructor to teach a course
- Changing textbooks or handout materials

Critical Success Area: Developmental Education Programs

Related statement from ACC's Mission (Board Policy A-1): [d] Special instructional programs and tutorial service to assist under-prepared students and others who wish special assistance to achieve their educational goals.

Effectiveness Measures:

1. Fall-to-Spring Retention Rates
2. Program Completion Rates
3. Course Completion Rates
4. Developmental-to-Credit Migration Rates

Overall the College is fulfilling this mission function satisfactorily.

Improvements:

Developmental communications programs have implemented several new initiatives to increase student retention, completion and migration to college-level credit courses, including the following:

- Offering eight-week classes in Reading Skills I and Reading Skills II
- Offering reading courses paired with government or psychology courses. Students completing reading with a C or better and a B or better in the paired course will exit remediation without having to re-take the TASP test.
- Offering Study Skills courses paired with basic math to help students succeed and overcome their fear of math.
- Offering developmental reading, vocabulary and writing courses in distance learning format
- Implementing the Academic Triangle project. This is an integrated class where three instructors collaborate to teach reading, writing, and study skills using a thematic approach to help students see the connection between reading and writing. The Academic Triangle project also helps first-time students connect with the Learning Labs, tutors, and counselors. Students "bond" together to become a community and are therefore more likely to continue in school. See http://www.austincc.edu/reading/ for more information regarding these initiatives.

Developmental Mathematics has also made a number of improvements to enhance student retention, completion and migration to college credit level courses including the following:

- Reduced the developmental mathematics sequence from four courses to three with the goal of increasing student retention and decreasing the amount of time students spend in remediation.
- Created an institutional option of non-course-based remediation to increase retention among students for whom traditional modes of instruction aren't effective.
- Offered developmental mathematics classes in new formats (computer-mediated, internet-based distance learning) in order to make remediation accessible to a larger population and increase student retention by accommodating a wider variety of learning styles.
- Conducted follow-up studies on the performance of students in the new three course developmental sequence. The report is located at: http://www.austincc.edu/mthdept3/tf01-02/agmin/devstudyglajar_jan25.txt
- Implemented departmental final exams in the developmental mathematics courses. The exams are written by a committee consisting of faculty who teach
- the developmental course and the subsequent course. The departmental exams are based on the objectives of the course and the curriculum.
- Offered developmental mathematics courses in various time sessions (16 weeks, 12 weeks, 8 weeks) to accommodate all students.
- Offered courses in Basic Math Skills paired with Study Skills courses to better serve most needy students.
- Monitored enrollments in developmental courses to assure an appropriate number of sections for students are available.

Critical Success Area: Adult Education

Related Statement from ACC Mission (Board Policy A-1) [d] Special instructional programs and tutorial service to assist under-prepared students and others who wish special assistance to achieve their educational goals.

Effectiveness Measures:

1. Completion Rate: Adults who need basic education skills necessary for literacy functioning will complete the literacy program.
2. Completion Rate: Adults who complete intermediate basic education will have sufficient basic education to enable them to benefit from job training and retraining programs and obtain productive employment.
3. Completion Rate: Adults who desire to continue their education will advance to at least the level of completion of secondary school.
4. Access

Overall the College is fulfilling this mission function satisfactorily.

Improvements:

In order to increase retention and assist students with goal setting, the orientation process has been improved. Orientations are two days for five hours each day. Sessions are limited to 25 students. Several Orientations run concurrently with two staff/instructors per session. During orientation, students are assessed and then placed in a class according to their assessment results. Case Managers and Instructors spend more

time with each student to discuss needs and define goals. Students hear talks on educational opportunities at ACC, funding opportunities, and services available through Work Source.

To meet the diverse needs of students throughout Travis County and conduct classes in the proper learning environment, we have enlisted additional partners to provide classroom space and other needed services. The Austin Area Urban League (AAUL) has provided three classrooms including computer labs, referral of AAUL students, and case management of AAUL students. Literacy Austin has provided one classroom (additional classrooms will be used in FY2004) and the referral of Literacy Austin students. And Lifeworks has provided one classroom, a GED program for 16-23 year olds, an instructor who is experienced in working with the young adult population, and case management.

A forms committee has been established and processes have been put in place to ensure that up-to-date data is reported to TEA. The forms committee will look at all forms currently being used and make recommendations for streamlining reporting and clarifying use of forms. Also the committee will make recommendations for automating the reporting process. Data will be entered into local database as it is received, exported to ACES (the state database) monthly, and checked for errors prior to the quarterly due date TEA. Instructors and staff will continue to receive the instructor handbook containing all forms and guidelines. Forms will also be covered during fall and summer in-service, and at new instructor trainings.

To ensure data are accurately input into ACES, on-going data input and reconciliation are conducted. Student enrollment and progress data are input as they are received. Data are exported each monthly from the local data collection system to ACES. A reconciliation of data in both systems is conducted once each quarter prior to the Texas Education Agency's quarterly submission due date. The Executive Director of Adult Basic Education Programs and partners review the data monthly to ensure accuracy.

A Technology Committee has been formed to develop a plan for the use of technology to supplement classroom instruction with computer-based instruction. This committee is responsible for making recommendations on ABE, GED, and ESL software to fit the specific needs of the programs.

Critical Success Area: Student Services (Access)

Related statement from ACC's Mission (Board Policy A-1): There is no specific statement related to this critical success area.

Effectiveness Measures:

1. The unduplicated headcount enrollment of ACC will reflect the diversity of the population the College serves.
2. The applicants who register and attend ACC will reflect the demographics of the applicant pool.

3. ACC will provide financial aid opportunities to students who demonstrate the most need.
4. The College will maintain a loan default rate 5 percentage points below the maximum threshold required by law (25%).

Overall the College is fulfilling this performing satisfactorily in this critical area.

Improvements:

1. The unduplicated headcount enrollment of ACC will reflect the diversity of the population the College serves.

Improvements that have been made to increase the diversity of the student population at ACC include the following:

- ACC Recruiters have targeted area high schools with high minority student populations.
- ACC Financial Aid staff has provided special information sessions at high schools and community centers for parents and students. Some of these sessions were particularly offered in Spanish.
- Implemented web enrollment, which provided additional registration access.
- Provided workshops for Capitol IDEA students in preparing for colleges.
- Increased Pell Award Grants from 5.1M to 7.2M.
- Strengthened relationships with community businesses and non-profits by providing structured, repetitive opportunities for outreach and recruitment on Campus.
- Collaborated with ESL faculty to create developmental reading courses designed for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Created uniform grievance and appeal procedures for students with disabilities.
- Increased the number of Financial Aid applications from African-American and Hispanic students by 22%.

2. The applicants who register and attend ACC will reflect the demographics of the applicant pool.

Improvements that were made to increase the number of applicants who enroll included the following:

- Implemented process for students to enroll on the ACC web.
- Signed an agreement with eight new SPEEDE (Secondary Post secondary Educational Electronic Data Exchange) partners and built the Datatel table to receive and upload transcripts from other institutions.

3. ACC will provide financial aid opportunities to students who demonstrate the most need.

Improvements that were implemented to increase the financial aid opportunities available to students with the most need included the following:

- Conducted Financial Aid Awareness activities on the campuses by setting up tables in the student lounge or available open areas to provide students with financial aid information and applications.

- Arranged for the MERV (Mobile Educational Resource Vehicle) to spend a day on two campuses (NRG and RVS). This allowed students to complete their financial aid application on-line and to receive assistance from financial aid staff and lender representatives.
- Conducted financial aid information sessions with Student Recruitment Office at local and area high school college nights, college fairs, etc.
- Increased Pell Award Grants from $5.1M to $7.2M.
- Spent 82% of Texas Grant Allocation, one of the best percentages in Texas.
- Provided testing fee waivers to students who are Pell eligible.

4. The College will maintain a loan default rate 5 percentage points below the maximum threshold required by law (25%).

Improvements that were implemented to maintain the College's already low loan default rate (6.4%) included continuing to follow an aggressive loan default plan that includes enforcing loan limits and requiring loan counseling.

Critical Success Area: Retention

Related statement from ACC's Mission (Board Policy A-1): There is no specific statement related to this critical success area.

Effectiveness Measures:

1. Fall-to-Spring Retention Rates
2. Fall-to-Fall Retention Rates
3. Completion Rates

Overall the College is fulfilling this performing satisfactorily in this critical area.

Improvements:

To improve the likelihood that students who enroll in courses will complete those courses and return the following semester and academic year, the offices under the supervision of the Associate Vice President of Retention and Student Services have implemented many processes and initiatives that encourage student engagement and support students who must overcome obstacles to their success. These improvements are listed below.

- Students whose placement test scores require them to enroll in two or more developmental courses are required to see a counselor. Counselors assist these students to develop an individual educational plan and advise and monitor the student according to the determined plan.
- Students whose grade point falls below a 2.0 or who withdraw from more than half of their classes are identified as not in good academic standing. These students are required to meet with a counselor to determine a plan for academic improvement.
- Counselors offered classes in study skills, time management, and test anxiety to help students build skills to be successful.
- The College implemented a three (3)-part tuition payment plan that allows students to pay their tuition and fees over time.

- Increased the number of Student Life events and club memberships, which motivate and support students to continue in college.
- Collaboration with IT and Curriculum Management office allowed the implementation of course pre-requisite verification.
- Implemented a system to print skills levels on class rolls.
- The Advising Manual was reviewed and up-dated.
- Collaborated with instructional areas to conduct advising updates so the admissions, registration, advising, and counseling staff have current information.
- Collaborated with ESL faculty to create developmental reading courses designed for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Created uniform grievance and appeal procedures for students with disabilities.
- Designed and implemented "Survivor Program" to provide ACC students with the opportunity to participate in structured recreational activities.
- Created a volunteer guide for students interested in community service opportunities
- Sponsored six Moo-VIN On programs to help students plan a successful transition to University of Texas.
- Co-sponsored first annual Open House for ACC students at the University of Texas.
- Updated career-counseling materials, including the DISCOVER software program.

Recommendations

1. Effectiveness measures should be defined for the two areas critical to the success of the College's mission fulfillment. The following two mission statements need to be assessed using measures defined by the function owners: [e] A continuing program of counseling and advising designed to assist students in achieving their individual educational and occupational goals and [f] A program of technology, library, media, and testing services to support instruction.

2. Function owners (Associate Vice Presidents) should revisit the currently existing measures for their areas to ensure they are providing information that can be used effectively to determine the improvements that should be made to enhance mission fulfillment.

3. Associate Vice Presidents should report improvements that resulted from assessment of the critical success area for which they are responsible. These reports will be the basis of an annual Effectiveness Improvements Report.

4. Information based on the data and improvements from the college-wide effectiveness measures should be incorporated into the process for creating the master plan.

5. Unit-level assessment planning should include reference to at least one critical success area.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").